

RETAIL PRICES - JUNE QUARTER, 1949.

All Items - "C" Series.

Index numbers of retail prices of all items ("C" Series) - with the weighted average of the six capital cities in 1923-1927 as base of 1000 - for the June quarter, 1949, with figures for March quarter, 1949, for comparison (in brackets), were:- Brisbane, 1338 (1295); Toowoomba, 1349 (1304); Rockhampton, 1349 (1307); Townsville, 1397 (1356); Bundaberg, 1327 (1287); and Warwick, 1339 (1294).

The upward movement of retail prices, after a pause in the first quarter of 1949, was resumed in the quarter just ended. In Brisbane, the rise in the index of 43 points exceeded the rise of 40 points in the last quarter of 1948, which itself was the greatest absolute increase in any quarter since prices started rising in 1933 following the slump in prices during the depression. The relative rise of 3.3 per cent. in the quarter was the greatest since 3.5 per cent. was recorded in the December quarter of 1940. Rises in the other Queensland cities were very similar to that in Brisbane, the smallest increase being 3.0 per cent. in Townsville, and the greatest 3.5 per cent, in Toowoomba and Warwick.

In Brisbane, food and grocery prices increased at the same rate (1.9 per cent.) as in the first quarter of 1949, which rate was much less than the average (4.1 per cent.) of the four quarters of 1948. Other cities showed a similar rise in food and grocery prices, except in Townsville where it was smaller (0.9 per cent.), and in Warwick where it was greater (2.6 per cent.).

The most important factor in the quarter's increase in the "C" Series index was a large rise in clothing and footwear prices (7.7 per cent. in Brisbane), due principally to the arrival of winter goods containing unsubsidised textiles. Miscellaneous items increased in price a little, the largest rise being in Brisbane (2.0 per cent.) where there was an increase in gas prices during the quarter.

In all six Queensland cities, food and groceries now cost over 1½ times as much as before the war, clothing and footwear approximately 2½ times as much, and miscellaneous items approximately 1½ times as much.

The indexes show the following percentage increases when compared with those for the periods shown.

Retail Price Index, "C" Series, Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1949.

City.			From Year Ended June, 1939.	From June Quarter, 1948.	From March Quarter, 1949.
			%	%	%
Brisbane	..	..	55.0	9.0	3.3
Toowoomba	..	..	58.5	9.5	3.5
Rockhampton	..	..	56.7	10.1	3.2
Townsville	..	..	53.2	10.6	3.0
Bundaberg	..	..	57.8	10.3	3.1
Warwick	..	..	62.9	9.8	3.5

Food and groceries, clothing and footwear, and the miscellaneous group of items comprising household drapery and hardware, fuel, light, fares, etc., have shown the following percentage changes during the last quarter and since 1938-39.

Retail Prices, Percentage Increases, June Quarter, 1949.

City.	Food and Groceries.		Clothing and Footwear.		Miscellaneous Items.	
	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1949.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1949.	From Year Ended June, 1939.	From March Quarter, 1949.
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Brisbane	55.3	1.9	132.0	7.7	34.6	2.0
Toowoomba	67.0	1.9	128.8	9.0	31.4	0.4
Rockhampton	53.7	1.8	128.4	8.3	38.0	0.4
Townsville	50.8	0.9	130.6	8.6	37.1	1.1
Bundaberg	54.0	1.8	131.8	7.3	30.9	0.6
Warwick	60.8	2.6	135.2	7.9	33.0	0.8

Food and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses).

The principal variations in food prices in the June quarter in Brisbane were in milk, which increased, and sago, which showed a marked decrease.

In other cities, there was a similar rise in the price of milk, but in Warwick the combined food and grocery price index rose more than in the other cities, owing to a larger increase in the price of milk and small rises in potatoes and pork. The increase in the food and grocery index in Townsville (0.9 per cent.) was less than in any of the other five cities, mainly because of a smaller increase in the price of milk.

The rent index increased in Brisbane and Rockhampton by 0.1 per cent., but remained stationary in the other four cities.

Clothing, Footwear, and Miscellaneous Items.

The clothing and footwear prices index increased in all six cities by percentages ranging from 7.3 per cent. for Bundaberg to 9.0 per cent. for Toowoomba. These increases were chiefly due to the removal of subsidies from clothing materials, the effect of which was felt on winter goods in the June quarter.

The miscellaneous items index rose most during the quarter in Brisbane (2.0 per cent.) where there was an increase in the price of gas, and in Townsville (1.1 per cent.) where household drapery and utensils were dearer. In all other cities the increase was less than 1 per cent.

Comparison of Costs in Queensland Cities.

The following table shows the amounts, for the various Queensland cities, required in June quarter, 1949, to purchase the quantity of goods or housing which would have cost £1 in Brisbane.

Amounts Required in Various Cities to Purchase Equivalent of £1 in Brisbane.

City.	All Items.			Food and Groceries.			Rent (4 and 5 Rooms).			Clothing and Footwear.			Miscellaneous Items.		
	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Brisbane ..	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0
Toowoomba ..	1	0	2	1	0	5½	1	0	3¼		19	8¾	1	0	2¼
Rockhampton	1	0	2	1	0	8½		18	3	1	0	1	1	0	10
Townsville..	1	0	10½	1	1	8		19	11¾	1	0	1¾	1	1	4¼
Bundaberg ..		19	10	1	0	11¼		15	10	1	0	2¾	1	0	3¼
Warwick ..	1	0	0¼	1	0	5½		17	7¼	1	0	2	1	0	10

For all items together, all cities in the June quarter maintained approximately their existing price relativities to Brisbane. For food and grocery items only, the principal change in the quarter was for Townsville, which has the highest prices, where an additional amount of 1s. 10½d. required in the March quarter to buy food and groceries worth £1 in Brisbane decreased to 1s. 8d. On the other hand, clothing and footwear prices rose more in Townsville (and in all the other cities except Bundaberg) than in Brisbane. Toowoomba is now the only city with lower clothing and footwear prices than Brisbane, and there the saving was only 3¼d in £1 in the June quarter, compared with 6d. in the March quarter. Miscellaneous items of drapery, hardware, fuel, fares, etc., are dearer in all the provincial cities than in Brisbane, the dearest city being Townsville where, in the June quarter, 1949, 1s. 4¼d. extra was needed for every £1 spent in Brisbane. The additional amounts required, however, were from 2d. to 4d. less in the various provincial cities in the June quarter than in the preceding quarter, owing to a rise in gas prices in Brisbane.

Basic Wage Rates in State Capital Cities.

The following table shows, for the June quarter of 1949, the retail price index number ("C" Series) for each of the six capital cities and the prevailing basic wage rates for males prescribed by Commonwealth and State industrial tribunals. The fourth column shows the amounts which would have been required in Brisbane to provide a standard of living equivalent to that provided by each State basic wage in its own capital city. The differences between these amounts and the State basic wage for Brisbane, which are given in the last column, show the margin of advantage in real purchasing power provided by the Queensland basic wage over each of the other State basic wages, according to price levels and wages prevailing at the middle of May, 1949.

Retail Prices and Basic Wage Rates, June Quarter, 1949.

Capital City.	Retail Price Index ("C" Series) 2nd Quarter, 1949.	Commonwealth Court Basic Wage for Males at 15.5.49.	State Court Basic Wage for Males at 15.5.49.	Equivalent at Brisbane Prices of Each State Basic Wage.	Margin of Purchasing Power in Favour of Brisbane State Basic Wage.
		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.
Brisbane ..	1338	5 19 0	6 3 0	6 3 0	-
Sydney ..	1425	6 7 0	6 7 0	5 19 3	3 9
Melbourne ..	1402	6 5 0	6 5 0	5 19 4	3 8
Adelaide ..	1377	6 1 0	6 5 0 ^a	6 1 6	1 6
Perth ..	1406	6 0 0	6 7 1	6 0 11	2 1
Hobart ..	1412	6 4 0	6 4 0	5 17 6	5 6

^a Operative from 19.5.49.

Following the publication of the index numbers shown in the above table, the basic wage of the Commonwealth Court was automatically adjusted from 1st August, 1949. The new rates and the amounts of adjustments are shown below, together with the latest basic wage rates for males and females declared by the various State industrial authorities, and the dates from which they operated.

Basic Wage Rates, September Quarter, 1949.

Capital City.	Commonwealth Basic Wage.		State Basic Wage.			
	Amount. ^a	Increase on Previous Quarter.	Males.	Females.	Date of Operation.	
	£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		
Brisbane ..	6 2 0	3 0	6 6 0	3 17 6	1.8.49	
Sydney ..	6 10 0	3 0	6 10 0	3 10 0	1.8.49	
Melbourne ..	6 8 0	3 0	(6 8 0)	(3 9 0)	(1.8.49) ^b	
Adelaide ..	6 4 0	3 0	6 5 0	3 8 6	19.5.49	
Perth ..	6 6 0	6 0	6 13 2	3 11 11	21.7.49	
Hobart ..	6 7 0	3 0	(6 7 0)	(3 8 6)	(1.8.49) ^b	

^a Rate for males. The female rate is generally 54 per cent. of the male rate.

^b No State wage declared, but rates shown are those of Commonwealth Court which are followed to a large extent.

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BRISBANE.

1st August, 1949.

Table No. 1 - The "All Items" Retail Prices Index - "C" Series.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1949.	Quarters Ended -				
				June, 1948.	Sept., 1948.	Decr., 1948.	March, 1949.	June, 1949.
Brisbane ..	917	863	1294	1227	1251	1291	1295	1338
Toowoomba ..	906	851	1301	1232	1260	1292	1304	1349
Rockhampton ..	903	861	1301	1225	1259	1290	1307	1349
Townsville ..	1023	912	1347	1263	1300	1335	1356	1397
Bundaberg ..	b	841	1283	1203	1241	1276	1287	1327
Weighted Average Five Towns ^a	915	864	1298	1229	1256	1294	1300	1343
Warwick ..	914	822	1291	1220	1249	1282	1294	1339

^a Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

^b Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 2 - Food, Groceries, and Rent (4 and 5 Roomed Houses) Index - "B" Series.

(Base: Weighted Average of Six Capital Cities, 1923-1927 = 1000.)

City.	Year Ended Decr., 1928.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Year Ended June, 1949.	Quarters Ended -				
				June, 1948.	Sept., 1948.	Decr., 1948.	March, 1949.	June, 1949.
Brisbane ..	901	852	1117	1058	1074	1116	1130	1146
Toowoomba ..	833	821	1135	1073	1092	1126	1153	1169
Rockhampton ..	858	837	1113	1047	1072	1107	1129	1145
Townsville ..	1047	916	1180	1109	1133	1169	1205	1213
Bundaberg ..	b	799	1089	1012	1040	1077	1098	1142
Weighted Average Five Towns ^a	892	851	1121	1060	1078	1118	1136	1151
Warwick ..	841	768	1096	1023	1047	1080	1103	1153

^a Prior to 1937 the five towns in the weighted averages included Charters Towers and Warwick which have now been replaced by Townsville and Bundaberg.

^b Prices for Bundaberg were not collected prior to September quarter, 1936.

Table No. 3 - Average Retail Prices of Food and Groceries, Brisbane.

Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Month of -		Commodity and Unit of Quantity.	Year Ended June, 1939.	Month of -	
		March, 1949.	June, 1949.			March, 1949.	June, 1949.
Bread .. 2 lb.	5.33	d.	7.50	Eggs .. 1 doz.	19.69	d.	36.00
Flour .. 2 lb.	3.73	5.36	5.36	Milk .. 1 qt.	6.00	8.55	10.10
Tea .. 1 lb.	26.99	33.00	33.00	Beef -			
Sugar .. 1 lb.	3.98	4.46	4.46	Sirloin Roast 1 lb.	8.73	17.00	17.00
Sago .. 1 lb.	3.00	14.94	10.30	Steak, Rump 1 lb.	11.34	21.55	21.55
Jam, Plum 1½ lb.	8.02	15.55	15.59	Steak, Chuck 1 lb.	5.83	10.55	10.55
Oats, Flaked 1 lb.	3.57	4.60	4.60	Rolled Brisket 1 lb.	5.48	10.50	10.50
Raisins .. 1 lb.	10.57	16.33	16.45	Mutton -			
Potatoes .. 7 lb.	14.88	24.05	23.27	Leg .. 1 lb.	7.75	12.15	12.10
Onions .. 1 lb.	2.93	3.68	3.64	Loin Chops 1 lb.	7.78	12.55	12.55
Soap .. 1 lb.	6.20	9.91	9.91	Pork -			
Butter .. 1 lb.	19.00	25.91	25.91	Leg .. 1 lb.	11.40	23.20	23.50
Cheese .. 1 lb.	13.28	17.55	17.55	Chops .. 1 lb.	11.48	23.65	23.95